

Message Text

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P 262157Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4273

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 0531

FROM RSO BECKETT

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ASEC, ARA, AR, ELAB

SUBJECT: INDUSTRIAL SABOTAGE, LABOR UNION MEMBERS AUSTRAL AIRLINES

1. THE SOURCE OF THIS INFORMATION IS A U.S. CITIZEN REPRESENTING A U.S. COMPANY WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR FURNISHING TECHNICAL GUIDANCE TO BOTH AUSTRAL AND AEREOLINAS. HIS ASSOCIATION WITH THESE COMPANIES IS DAILY AND AT ALL LEVELS. THE REPORTED INFORMATION HAS NOT BEEN CONFIRMED BY THE REPORTING OFFICER. THE SOURCE IS WELL KNOWN TO THE REPORTING OFFICER AND IS CONSIDERED TO BE RELIABLE. THE CONTENTS OF THIS REPORT SHOULD NOT, REPEAT SHOULD NOT BE DISCUSSED WITH FOREIGN NATIONALS SINCE ITS DISCLOSURE COULD PLACE THE LIFE OF THE SOURCE IN JEOPARDY.

2. ON OR ABOUT JANUARY 22, 1976 AN AUSTRAL F-28 AIRCRAFT WAS BEING CHECKED PRIOR TO TAKE OFF. A PROBLEM WAS DETECTED IN A HYDRAULIC SYSTEM WHICH CONTROLLED THE FLAPS. AFTER CONSIDERABLE TROUBLE SHOOTING IT WAS DISCOVERED A FUSE HAD BEEN REMOVED AND A PIECE OF PAPER HAD BEEN INSERTED IN ITS PLACE.

3. IN THE LINE MAINTENANCE THERE HAS BEEN A GENERAL SLOW DOWN WITH SEVERAL DELIBERATE ACTS BEING COMMITTED TO DISRUPT AND DELAY FLIGHT OPERATIONS, I.E., INSPECTION TAGS BEING REMOVED FROM FIRE EXTINGUISHERS ON AIRCRAFT WHICH WOULD REQUIRE REPLACEMENT OF THE UNIT BEFORE FLIGHT; REFUELING CREWS REFUSING TO FILL TANKS UNLESS SAFETY PRECAUTION

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SIGNS WERE POSTED.

4. TO THE SOURCE'S KNOWLEDGE, THERE HAVE BEEN NO ACTS OF SABOTAGE AT AEREOLINAS.

5. SOURCE WAS INFORMED BY A MEMBER OF AUSTRAL STAFF THAT THE FIVE AUSTRAL UNIONS WERE PREPARED TO ACCEPT AN 18 PERCENT SALARY INCREASE PLUS 6 PERCENT SOCIAL BENEFITS. THE UNIONS RECEIVED A TELEPHONE CALL (IDENTITY OF CALLER UNKNOWN) INSTRUCTING THEM NOT TO ACCEPT THE RAISE. A MEETING IS TO BE HELD ON JANUARY 26, 1976 BETWEEN THE UNIONS REPRESENTING AEREOLINEAS AND THE PRESIDENT OF AEREOLINAS. SHOULD NO AGREEMENT BE REACHED THERE WILL BE A GENERAL SLOW DOWN WITH A DECISION BEING MADE ON JANUARY 28, 1976 AS TO WHETHER OR NOT TO STRIKE.

6. SOURCE STATED HE WOULD RECOMMEND THAT UNTIL THE WAGE PROBLEM IS SETTLED EXTREME CARE SHOULD BE USED IN FLYING ON AIRCRAFT SERVICED BY THE UNIONS. IT WAS HIS OPINION THAT THE ACTS BEING COMMITTED WERE FOR HAMPERING OPERATION. BOTH AEREOLINAS AND AUSTRAL ARE INTENSIFYING THEIR INSPECTION PROCEDURES.

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